



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* GEORGIA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, February 3, 2022

Georgia, Florida attorneys indicted for COVID-19 fraud scheme

Defendants alleged to have sent fake documents to get SBA loans

SAVANNAH, GA: Two attorneys and a Savannah man have been indicted on multiple felony charges in the Southern District of Georgia for a wide-ranging COVID-19 relief fraud scheme.

Shaquandra Woods, 39, of Jacksonville, Fla.; **Courtney Gilchrist**, 36, of Savannah; and **Kenneth Jackson**, 43, of Savannah, are named in the eight-count indictment returned by a U.S. District Grand Jury charging them with Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud and other felonies, said David H. Estes, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia. The charges carried statutory penalties upon conviction of up to 30 years in federal prison followed by a period of supervised release, along with substantial financial penalties and restitution to the U.S. government.

There is no parole in the federal system.

"When Congress appropriated funding for the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the intention was to provide a safety net for small businesses struggling from the effects of a global pandemic," said U.S. Attorney Estes. "We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to identify and hold accountable anyone who would attempt to undermine these programs for their own profit."

As described in the indictment, Woods is an attorney licensed to practice law in Florida and Georgia, and Gilchrist is an attorney licensed to practice law in Georgia. The indictment alleges that Woods, Gilchrist, and Jackson "fraudulently sought and collectively received hundreds of thousands of dollars in relief payments by making false and fraudulent representations to the Small Business Administration (SBA)."

As authorized by the CARES Act, SBA provided Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) to eligible small businesses experiencing substantial financial interruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The indictment alleges the conspirators used fraudulent documents to submit multiple EIDL applications resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in disbursements from the SBA.

All three defendants are charged with Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud. Woods also is charged with two counts of False Statement on Loan Applications and two counts of False Documents. Gilchrist also is

charged with two counts of False Statement on Loan Application, False Documents, and a False Statement, and Jackson also is charged with a False Statement.

Criminal indictments contain only charges; defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at [866-720-5721](tel:866-720-5721) or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

The case is being investigated by the FBI and the Small Business Administration Office of Inspector General, and prosecuted for the United States by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jonathan A. Porter and Patrick J. Schwedler.

Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Disaster Fraud

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

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